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AUTHOR Carbone, Gilbert J.
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ABSTRACT

A $100,000 appropriation for fiscal year 1986 directed the Washington State Board for Community College Education and the state's Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish a pilot program for coordinating the efforts of volunteer literacy tutors. The 12 projects funded by the program recruited and trained 1,473 volunteer tutors and provided literacy services to 2,174 clients at an average cost of $46 per client. Project funds supported part-time tutor coordinators who trained the volunteers and matched them with clients. Statistics gathered on the tutoring clients revealed the following: (1) the average age of the clients was 33 years; (2) 51% were married and most had family responsibilities; (3) 37% were employed, and only 4% were receiving job training; (4) 45.2% had received their prior schooling in Washington; (5) 36.5% were immigrants or refugees; and (6) four-fifths of the clients had reading ability at or below the sixth-grade level when entering the program, and 4% read at above the eighth-grade level. Evidence from one sponsored literacy project indicated that as few as 50 hours of tutoring could produce an average gain in reading ability of approximately one grade level. Other outcomes of the program included creating a greater awareness of literacy problems in local communities and developing cooperative relationships among literacy service providers in those areas. Funding information, quotes regarding the projects and the illiteracy problems in Washington, and the authorizing legislation for the project appropriations are appended. (UCM)

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THE 1986 LITERACY TUTOR COORDINATION PROGRAM

A Report to the Legislature pursuant to Chapter 312, Laws of 1986 (ESSB 4762)

Gilbert J. Carbone

JC 880 034

WASHINGTON
State Board for Community College Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction

December 3, 1987

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Now You Know How People Who Can't Read Feel.

It's called illiteracy. More than 27 million Americans — are functionally illiterate. An additional 46 million people are marginally literate — their reading and writing skills being so poor that they cannot complete a job application by themselves or pass a written driver's license test without help.

An estimated $20 billion is spent annually on social services that can be attributed to illiteracy. That's $83 a year for each man, woman and child in America.

An estimated 11 percent of Washington State residents are functionally illiterate with an education level below the eighth grade. In Pierce County, the rate of illiteracy is about six percent, according to the 1980 census.

Illiteracy knows no boundaries. The invisible minority of Americans who can't read or write are not hidden away in urban ghettos or rural whistle stops. They are all around us . . . and they want help.
The Tacoma News Tribune is committed to reducing the problem of illiteracy. In the months ahead, the newspaper will present and sponsor community action programs, public television programming and education alternatives.

For further information about receiving help from the program or to volunteer please call one of the following numbers:

- Tacoma Community House: 383-3951
- Tacoma Community College: 566-5029
- Clover Park Voc./Tech.: 756-5685
- Pierce College: 964-7346
- Literacy Council: 272-2471
- Tacoma Public Schools: 591-3812

The Morning
News Tribune

12/7/87

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A $100,000 appropriation for fiscal year 1986 directed the State Board for Community College Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish a pilot program for coordinating the efforts of volunteer literacy tutors. Twelve projects funded by the program recruited and trained 1,473 volunteer tutors and provided literacy services to 2,174 clients at an average cost of $46 per client.

Project funds supported part-time tutor coordinators who trained the volunteers, matched them with clients who desired services, and provided data regarding the success of the program. Based on an average of 50 hours of service per tutor, it was estimated that the appropriation generated more than $650,000 in volunteer tutoring effort during the year.

Information about the clients who received tutoring services showed that they tended to be adults (average age 33) with family responsibilities and who were either unemployed or underemployed. Less than one-half of them had received their prior schooling in Washington. More than one-third were immigrants or refugees.

Four-fifths of the clients had reading ability at or below the sixth-grade level when entering the program. Only four percent read above the eighth-grade level.

There is some evidence that as few as 50 hours of tutoring can produce an average gain in reading ability of approximately one grade level. Other outcomes of the program included creating a greater awareness of literacy problems in local communities and developing cooperative relationships among literacy service providers in these areas.

BACKGROUND

The supplemental budget adopted for the second year of the 1985-87 biennium included a $100,000 appropriation "solely to implement a pilot program for volunteer literacy tutorial coordination."[1] The provision further specified that the program was to be jointly coordinated by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board for Community College Education "with special emphasis on raising the potential of adult illiterates for permanent employment." The funds were directed to be placed in the community college board's budget.

The appropriation also required that the two cooperating state agencies report by January, 1988, on the pilot program. The following information is intended to satisfy that requirement.

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[1] ESSB 4762 and Chapter 312, Sec. 608, Laws of 1986. The initial amount requested was $350,000. A similar request for $2 million in 1985 was not funded in the 1985-86 biennial budget. It should also be noted that the 1987-89 biennial appropriation act contained $480,000 for continuation of the program. The success of the pilot year, as this report shows, fully justifies the confidence the legislature had in providing the continuation of funding.

FUNCTIONAL LITERACY IN WASHINGTON

Persons who lack reading ability at levels necessary to perform many everyday functions (understanding directions on a medicine bottle or completing an employment application) are frequently called functional illiterates. Those individuals will be called "skill deficient" persons in the remainder of this report.

Skill deficient persons are difficult to identify and even more difficult to describe statistically. They tend to be very proficient at disguising their basic limitations. Hard statistics about the extent of the problem in Washington, therefore, are not available.

In an attempt to describe the problem, literacy program providers have been forced to rely on census data about the level of formal education achieved by the general population. These data, when compared to known required reading levels of common written material, are used in estimating the potential clientele of remedial educational programs.

Estimates of skill deficient individuals nationally run as high as 26 million. In Washington, it is estimated that there are approximately 465,000 such persons. That represents as many as one of every seven adults. This estimate is based in part on the 1980 census data which revealed that 252,239 persons 25 years or older had completed only eight or fewer years of formal schooling.

The softness of the statistics notwithstanding, there is little question that skill deficiency is an acute national and local problem. Not only is it an important health and safety issue, but the economic fortunes of these individuals and the nation in general are significantly affected.

VOLUNTEER TUTORING PROGRAM

Use of volunteer tutors is a very direct and cost-effective means of addressing literacy problems. Existing literacy service providers identified coordination of volunteer tutors as the most pressing need that the appropriation could satisfy.

More than 100 community-based literacy organizations, community colleges, and vocational technical institutes were invited to submit proposals. Project funds were intended to be used primarily for support of tutor coordinators. Twenty-one proposals were received and evaluated by a screening committee. It was possible to fund 12 projects. No project received more than $10,000.

Among other things, the selection criteria required that the grant recipients establish cooperative efforts with other literacy providers in their service areas. Thus, the funding was used to enhance the relationships among local entities concerned with literacy problems. A list of the successful applicants can be found at the end of this report.

PROGRAM RESULTS

The 12 funded tutor coordination projects in fiscal year 1986 reported training 1,473 volunteer tutors. Tutoring services were provided to 2,147 individuals. Reports by project directors showed that the average time commitment by a volunteer tutor was about 50 hours during the year, not including training periods.

It is estimated that the value of a volunteer's time is approximately $9 for each hour of service. Applying those values to the service of the volunteer tutors in this program yields an estimated return on the $100,000 appropriation of more than $650,000 in contributed tutoring time.

Assuming the same return can be expected on the $480,000 appropriated for the 1987-89 biennium, the value of the volunteer services associated with the second and third years of this program should range between $2.9 and $4.3 million. These estimates are conservative. Time spent in training tutors was not included. In addition, even though the tutor coordinators were employed one-half time or less, their actual time involvement far exceeded their paid levels.

A WORD OF CAUTION

Even though this program achieved significant results, it would be incorrect to assume that it addressed more than a minor portion of the literacy problem in Washington. Tutoring programs alone will not solve the problem. The 2,147 individuals who received tutoring represent only a very small percentage of the potential clientele literacy programs could serve.

However, the cost to the state to provide the tutoring in the pilot program was also very small--$46 per individual served. The long-range value of literacy training in terms of employability, self-sufficiency, and self-esteem is difficult to calculate.

One of the other residual effects of such programs is that of getting the tutoring clients into the educational system. Tutoring clients subsequently can and do enroll in Adult Basic Education, English-as-a-Second Language, GED preparation, and other basic education courses offered by both public and private entities. These programs, in turn, lead to higher-level offerings of the institutions.

THE CLIENTS SERVED

In appropriating the $100,000, the legislature directed that the pilot project gather data about the characteristics of the clients it served. The grant recipients were required to submit a "Client Census Report" for individuals who received tutoring assistance. The following material describes the individuals who were in the program.

Client Characteristics	Incident in Client Group[2]
Age	Range was 15 to 85; average was 33
Marital status	51 percent were married
Children under care	Range was 0 to 9; average was 2
Age of youngest child	Average was 7
Last year school attended	1920 to 1987
Highest year school completed	Range was 1 to 20; average was 9
Other basic skill instruction	16 percent enrolled in other programs
Employment status	37 percent were employed
Weekly hours worked	Average was 11
Months of unemployment	Average was 7
Receiving job training	Four percent

The above profile of the tutoring clients supported some generally-held assumptions about individuals in need of literacy training. They tended to be adults with family responsibilities who are unemployed or underemployed.

Relatively few of them were in job training situations, probably because of their basic skill deficiencies. The incident of young children in the care of these individuals also was of importance. Skill-deficient parents contribute little to developing strong literacy habits in their offspring. This fact was the basis for the $1.6 million Early Start Program appropriation provided in the 1987-89 biennial budget.

[2] Because the Client Census Report responses were optional, the number received for each item varies. The data in this report were drawn from 1,803 census forms that provided usable responses. The decision to make responses optional was based on advice from basic skills program directors who felt potential clients might be reluctant to enter the program if forced to reveal facts that may be the source of embarrassment.

SOURCE OF TUTORING CLIENTS

One of the questions asked the tutoring clients concerned the state or nation in which they last attended school. The following list summarizes the responses obtained from the 1,803 clients in the program:

Location of Last School Attended	Number	Percent
Washington	815	45.2%
California	77	4.3%
Oregon	33	1.8%
Texas	27	1.5%
Idaho	25	1.4%
Oklahoma	11	.6%
All other states (including the Virgin Islands & Puerto Rico)	155	8.6%
Asia & Pacific Islands	250	13.8%
South and Central America	121	6.7%
All other nations	289	16.0%
TOTAL	1,803	100.0%

Several significant facts were revealed by these data. More than one-half of the literacy problems represented by this group of people appeared to have their roots in educational systems outside Washington. More than one-third of the tutoring clients received their prior schooling in foreign countries.

EDUCATIONAL AND READING LEVELS

Information gathered through this program made it possible to relate three key characteristics of the tutoring clients - years of school attended, location of last school attended, and reading level upon entering the program. Data on these three characteristics were available on 1273 of the clients.

The following table shows the number and proportion of the clients in categories based on the three characteristics. These results may be somewhat misleading, however, because the last school attended may have been only the final in a series of schools attended.

YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED AND LOCATION OF LAST SCHOOL ATTENDED OF 1,273 TUTORING CLIENTS WITH EIGHTH GRADE OR LOWER READING ABILITY

	Years of School Completed			
LOCATION OF LAST SCHOOL ATTENDED	7 or less	8 thru 11	12 or more	Totals
Washington	93 (7%)	297 (23%)	289 (23%)	679 (53%)
Other State	81 (6%)	138 (11%)	67 (5%)	289 (22%)
Foreign Country	108 (8%)	91 (7%)	109 (9%)	308 (24%)
TOTALS	282 (22%)	526 (41%)	465 (37%)	1273 (100%)

AWARENESS OF THE PROGRAM

Tutoring clients became aware of the program through a variety of sources. In their order of frequency, the following sources were reported: Teachers and counselors, social and welfare agencies, friends and relatives, and news media. Surprisingly, only 17 percent of the clients reported becoming aware of the program through the news media, even in light of the national television literacy awareness campaign that was conducted during the year.

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The relationship between literacy level and employability is well established. In a 1987 report on public policy regarding the work force, the Hudson Institute cited U.S. Department of Labor data relating skill level to job availability.[3] "The fastest-growing jobs require much higher math, language, and reasoning capabilities than current jobs," according to the report. The report also found that service occupations--cooks, nursing aides, waiters, and janitors--were one of the highest growth job categories. Service occupations is also the category where a large percentage of literacy program clients will seek and find employment.

Providing tutoring services to skill deficient persons was not the only outcome of this program, however. Presentations about adult literacy and the tutoring projects were given to many service clubs and community organizations in the areas where the pilot projects operated. This activity served to increase the awareness of the general public about the incident and effects of skill deficient persons in the home, the workplace, and the larger community. These community contacts also were the basis for generating some local financial support and were also the source of individuals who wished to become volunteer tutors.

[3] William B. Johnston and Arnold E. Packer, Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the Twenty-first Century (Indianapolis: Hudson Institute, 1987).

One project (Grays Harbor College) reported that clients who received 50 or more hours of tutoring showed an average gain in reading level of slightly more than 12 months. Comparable gains in reading level for regular classroom instruction range from 75 to 100 hours of classroom instruction. The rate of progress will differ greatly among the diverse clients in programs such as these.

Other results of the program include both the training of the large group of volunteer tutors and the increased awareness of literacy problems in the participating communities. Many of the project directors reported that the grants were the basis for starting literacy tutoring programs where none previously existed.

The projects also served to build relationships among community organizations working in the literacy field. These efforts tended to avoid duplication and helped define the areas of greatest need. In addition, several of the projects utilized college student tutors who were provided by their institutions with financial support from a special work study program administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board. Twenty-one colleges and vocational technical institutes received allocations for this purpose.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

The $100,000 appropriation for a pilot literacy tutoring program paid high dividends for Washington. More than 2,000 individuals received literacy services from a cadre of nearly 1,500 volunteer tutors. Equally important, the 12 tutor coordination projects established a visible literacy program presence in communities throughout the state. Although several of the project grants were awarded to existing literacy service providers, the funding provided the first paid staff support for these efforts. The result was a significant increase in their ability to serve clients.

Nearly two-thirds of the clients served were unemployed and many of the remainder were underemployed.

FISCAL YEAR 1986 LITERACY TUTORING GRANT PROJECTS

Project Number	Lead and Cooperating Agencies	Grant Amount
1	Project READ of Walla Walla and Walla Walla Community College	$ 5,000
2.	North Seattle Community College, Central Seattle Community College and the Literacy Action Center	$10,000
3.	Grays Harbor Community College and Twin Harbors Literacy, Montesano Community School, RSVP, and Timberland Regional Library	$ 9,991
4.	Literacy Council of Kitsap	$ 6,456
5.	Lewis-Clark Valley Literacy Council (Clarkston) and Walla Walla Community College, Clarkston Branch	$ 6,540
6.	Yakima Valley Community College and Yakima Valley Literacy Council	$ 8,809
7.	Clark Community College and Clark County Literacy Project	$ 8,500
8.	Whatcom Literacy Council, Bellingham Vocational-Technical Institute, and Whatcom Community College	$ 9,600
9.	Tacoma Community House and Tacoma Community College	$ 9,025
10.	Bellevue Community College and Eastside Literacy Council	$ 8,500
11.	Snohomish County Literacy Coalition (Everett Community College, Edmonds Community College, Sno-Isle Literacy Council, Sno-Isle Regional Library System, and Region 3 Department of Social and Health Services	$ 9,000
12.	South Puget Sound Community College and Thurston County	$ 8,579
	Project Total	$100,000

LITERACY PROGRAM QUOTES

"Our students, almost without exception, seek literacy as a means to get and keep a better job or, indeed, any job at all. They have very little belief in their ability to learn and are positively awed by their steps toward success. 'I just found out there's a whole other world out there that I never got to be in....and now I am,' said a young man recently."

Wilma Totten
Whatcom Literacy Council and
Whatcom Community College

Walla Walla truck driver Larry Hunt, age 40, entered tutoring offered by Project READ. He said, "If somebody doesn't know how to read, it's the best way to go. It's one-on-one. I made a six-month commitment and they made a commitment to me." After a month, he has already noticed an improvement. Larry learned about the program after his wife saw an announcement on the local-access cable television channel and called Project READ.

Debbie Conklin
Project READ and
Walla Walla Community College

"The tutor coordinator was hired for 16 hours per week. From the beginning (she) worked an average of 24 hours per week. More than 40 presentations were made to community organizations and service clubs. The state grant got the program started. During the year the staff was able to generate the following additional support: Junior Club of Walla Walla, $1,800; National Endowment Foundation of the AAUW, $3,000; United Way of Walla Walla $3,000; in-kind support from the Walla Walla Public Library, Walla Walla Community College, and the YMCA."

Project READ and
Walla Walla Community College

"We at Social Security see the importance of a volunteer program to combat illiteracy in this area of the state. We have contacts with many people who are unable to read and/or understand simple basic instructions relating to completing a form for a Social Security number, filing for benefits, etc. Many of our 'self-help' disability forms are returned incomplete with the statement of 'I can't read.'"

Doris E. Friedel, Branch Manager
Social Security Administration
Aberdeen, WA

"We at CareUnit see the impact that illiteracy has had in [illegible] of the state. As many as 13 percent of our program alumni have literac[illegible] We have always received prompt attention and enthusiastic support [illegible] program personnel.

Julie Anderson
St. Joseph Hospital
Aberdeen, WA

"There has been little change in the needs of the community. Over 20 percent of the students drop out of the local high school and the number of public assistance recipients remains high."

Marjorie Briney
Walla Walla Community College and
Lewis-Clark Valley Literacy Council
(Clarkston, WA)

"The Adult Literacy Project opened its doors for service in October, 1986. The first group of trained volunteers started tutoring in a church parsonage in the central area of Tacoma. Since that time, we have seen about 150 adults, with at least 48 percent reading below the third grade level. A high priority was to develop other sources of funding for the project.....we managed to raise an additional $4,600."

Debbie Reck
Tacoma Community House and
Tacoma Community College

"Twin Harbors Literacy received a Governor's Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service to the Community. In addition.....Twin Harbors Literacy has been nominated for the State Community Education Association's Related Organization/Agency Award for 1986-87."

Gary Higoshi
Grays Harbor Community College

"Our student recruitment efforts have centered around enhancing our contacts with local agencies that frequently come into contact with potential students. This month we have worked specifically with Social Security, Youth Help, Employment Security, Head Start, DSHS, and Evergreen Mental Health."

Gary Higoshi
Grays Harbor Community College

"Problems encountered in the implementation of our volunteer-based literacy project have been due to rapid growth; we are 'running to keep up.' It is difficult to define and develop a new program while simultaneously implementing and trouble-shooting--especially when the key actors have many responsibilities and duties unrelated to the literacy project. The difficulties are compounded by geographical distances between sites."

Mary Lou Schmidt
Yakima Valley Community College

"A significant problem exists in the area of evaluation. There is not available for purchase a test normed on adults designed to measure reading of students who are performing at a level below grade 2.5."

Mary Lou Schmidt
Yakima Valley Community College

"It has been estimated from the 1980 census that as many as 17,000 residents of Snohomish County are functionally illiterate. This coupled with a 7.3 percent unemployment rate limits chances for gainful employment. I do not need to remind you that as individual reading skills improve, so do social, fiscal, and employment skills, allowing a person to become more independent and increasing his/her sense of self-esteem."

Karen Johnson
Snohomish County Literacy Coalition

"With the addition of the tutor coordinator this past year, an active publicity campaign has been designed and implemented. We have been able to increase the number of public speaking engagements, tap into business and agency newsletters, enlarge the newsletter, take part in three resource fairs, do radio interviews, develop a logo and get it printed on a supermarket's grocery bags, and develop promotional materials."

Betty Morrow
Snohomish County Literacy Coalition

"During the year we have established literacy sites in Yakima, Ellensburg, Sunnyside, and Grandview. A total of 148 volunteers have been trained to work in the literacy project; they have contributed 5,199 hours of service. A total of 221 students have been served; they have received 7,463 hours of instruction."

Mary Lou Schmidt
Yakima Valley Community College

"Increased tutor intake and placement resulted this year in greater need for coordination and monitoring than expected. (We) recruited and matched 126 tutors, almost double the number projected. At the same time the need still exists to reach out especially to serve more native English speakers."

Kay Gates
Bellevue Community College and
Eastside Literacy Council

GJC:AJB/MER
AI-LITERACY
11-11-87

FOR THE ((~~COUNCIL FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION~~)) HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

	FY 1986	FY 1987
General Fund Appropriation——		
State ..... $	((~~17,966,000~~)) 17,166,000	((~~17,967,000~~)) 18,917,000
General Fund Appropriation——		
Federal ..... $	1,817,000	1,817,000
State Educational Grant Appropriation ..... $	20,000	20,000
Total Appropriation	$((~~39,607,000~~)) 39,757,000	

The appropriations in this section are subject to the following conditions and limitations:

(1) No later than June 30, 1986, the ((~~council's~~)) board's first priority shall be to provide financial assistance to the core of students with extremely high unmet need. The ((~~council~~)) board shall adopt a definition for this group of students and provide financial aid for all such students at a standard to be established by the ((~~council~~)) board. To the greatest extent possible, the ((~~council~~)) board shall emphasize work study and other self-help programs in its financial assistance programs.

(2) The ((~~council~~)) board shall take all necessary management precautions to ensure that financial aid awards to individuals and institutions do not exceed the amounts provided in subsection (1) of this section. Any over-commitment of funds shall be paid directly from the funds provided for the coordination and policy analysis program until those funds are exhausted.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 608. A new section is added to chapter 6, Laws of 1985 ex. sess. to read as follows:

FOR THE STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATION

General Fund Appropriation ..... $ 1,729,000

The appropriation in this section is subject to the following conditions and limitations:

(1) $1,629,000 of the appropriation shall be expended solely to satisfy judgments and claims incurred from the deferral of faculty salary increases during the 1981-83 fiscal biennium. The appropriation shall be spent for all salary and interest costs incurred in fiscal year 1983. Additional costs related to the salary deferral but incurred after fiscal year 1983 shall be borne by the districts incurring such costs. Acceptance of the proceeds of this appropriation shall result in complete discharge of all claims of any nature whatsoever of all plaintiffs regarding the 1981-83 salary deferral.

(2) $100,000 of this appropriation is provided solely to implement a pilot program for volunteer literacy tutorial coordination. The pilot program shall be jointly coordinated by the superintendent of public instruction and the state board for community college education with special emphasis on raising the potential of adult illiterates for permanent employment.

By January 1988, the superintendent of public instruction and the state board of community college education shall provide the appropriate legislative standing committees with a report on the educational history of students in adult literacy programs and in other publicly funded programs designed to provide adults with basic educational skills; the highest grade level attained by students; the states where the students attended school; and the amount of time the students spent in Washington schools.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 609. A new section is added to chapter 6, Laws of 1985 ex. sess. to read as follows:

The senate committee on education, the house of representatives committee on higher education, and the committees on ways and means of the senate and house of representatives shall conduct a study of higher education faculty salaries and shall make recommendations to the legislature by December 1, 1986.

PART VII
SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS

*Sec. 701. Section 701, chapter 6, Laws of 1985 ex. sess. (uncodified) is amended to read as follows:

FOR THE GOVERNOR——EMERGENCY FUND

General Fund Appropriation——State ..... $ 1,700,000

The appropriation in this section is subject to the following conditions and limitations:

(1) The appropriation is for the governor's emergency fund to be allocated for the carrying out of the critically necessary work of any agency.

(2) $100,000 of this appropriation may be spent for law enforcement and social service problems arising from Expo '86.

*Sec. 701 was partially vetoed, see message at end of chapter.

Sec. 702. Section 702, chapter 6, Laws of 1985 ex. sess. as amended by section 1, chapter 1, Laws of 1986 (uncodified) is amended to read as follows:

FOR THE GOVERNOR——COMPARABLE WORTH IMPLEMENTATION AND LAWSUIT

General Fund Appropriation ..... $	26,790,000
Special Fund Salary Increase Revolving Fund Appropriation ..... $	19,120,000
Total Appropriation ..... $	45,910,000

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges FEB 19 1988